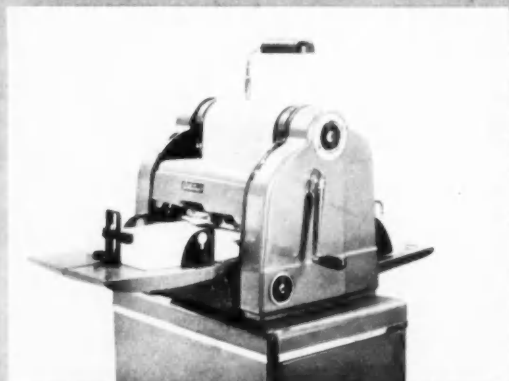
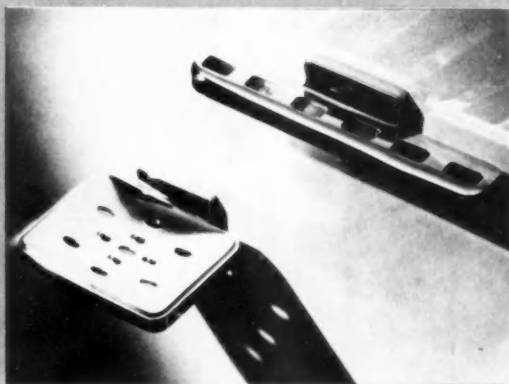


Arch

# Design



THE MAGAZINE FOR MANUFACTURERS, DESIGNERS AND RETAILERS

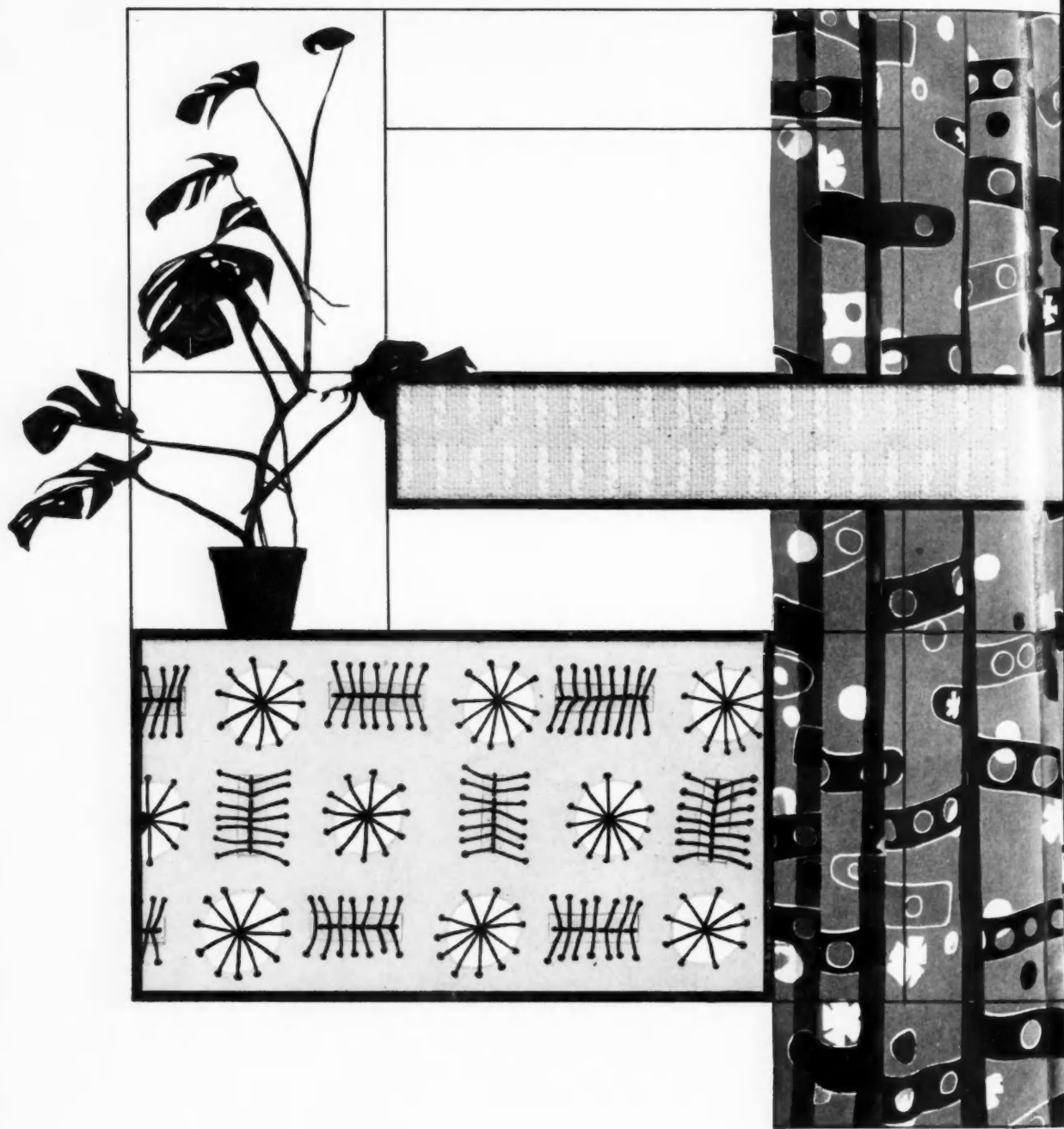


APRIL 1952 NUMBER 40

*The Council of Industrial Design*

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D. Whitehead Ltd, Higher Mill, Rawtenstall, Lancs

NUMBER 40

APRIL 1952

# Design

The monthly journal for manufacturers, designers and retailers, published for the Council of Industrial Design and the Scottish Committee of the Council

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## CONTENTS

DESIGN TRAINING:	
Opportunities limited	4
DESIGN AND THE RETAILER:	
Distinctively Dolcis	8
DESIGN POLICY IN ACTION: II	
Twenty years of industrial design	12
CASE HISTORY:	
Designing bathroom fittings	20
METHODS AND MATERIALS:	
Synthetic resin glues	23
Car design for world markets	
George Williams	16
New books <i>W. M. de Majo and others</i>	15, 28
News	3, 7, 25
Letters to the Editor	28

## FRONT COVER PICTURES

HK settee  
(page 25)



Masque bathroom  
fittings (page 20)



Gestetner dupli-  
cator (page 14)



Rover 75 car  
(page 19)

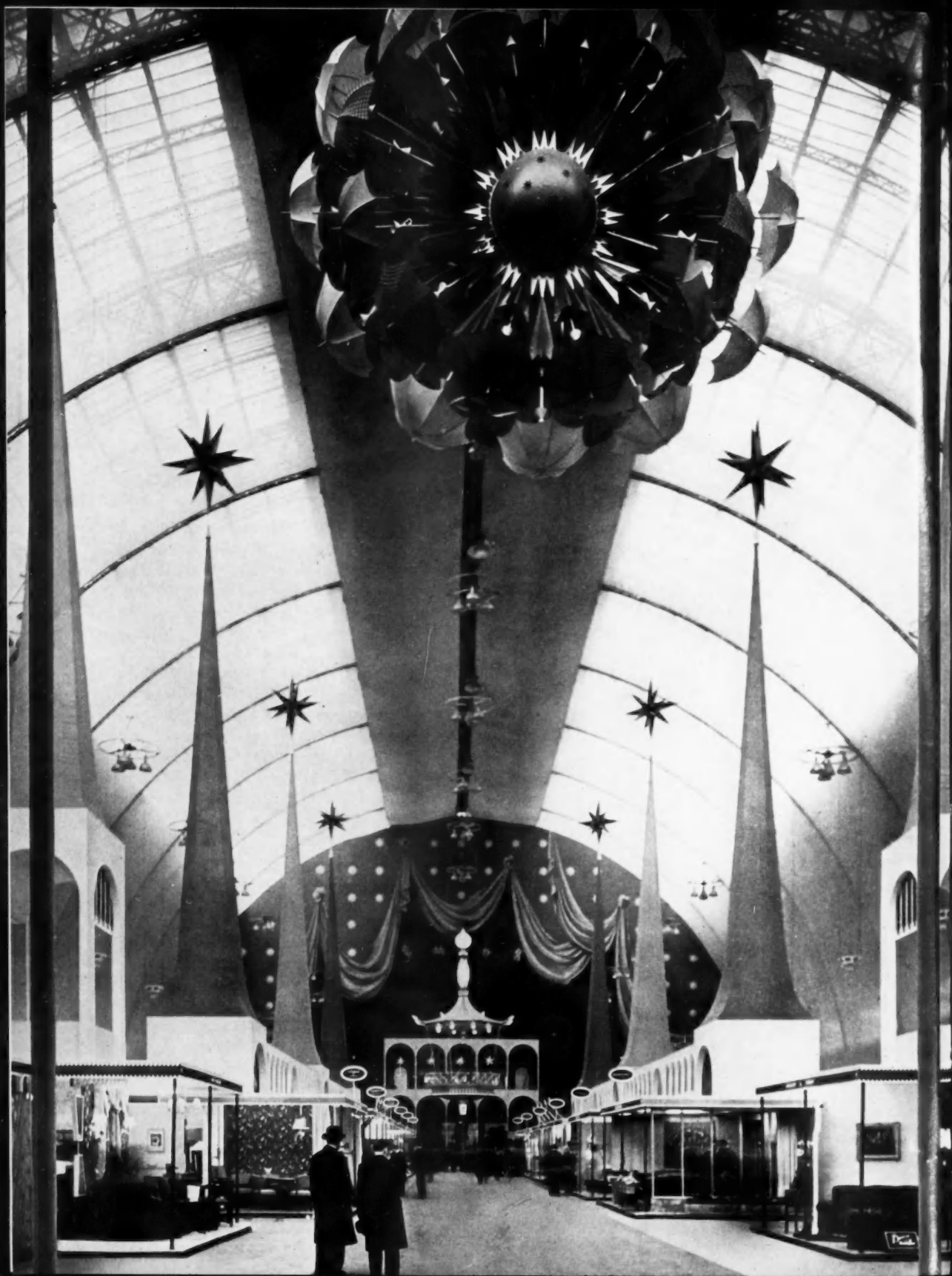
## 'It's what the public wants'

"THAT'S A BIT of a bastard" we overheard a visitor say, pointing to a flatulent piece of Repro-Jaco. "That's an insult to bastards," retorted the manufacturer; "there are no words bad enough to describe that stuff and we know it, but it's what the public wants."

We purposely went to the 1952 British Furniture Exhibition at Earl's Court on a Saturday afternoon to see the public wanting its furniture, and after several hours of mingling and eavesdropping we came away with the clear impression that the public has other ideas, especially the young couples. Wherever we saw a crowd of young men and women on a stand we found a display of modest, well-made furniture; and in most cases this furniture could be classed as of good contemporary design. The grander stands, and particularly those sporting fat, shiny suites named after titles in the peerage or after the smarter districts of the West End, seemed to be relatively deserted except for their staffs of glossy salesmen. But, as the manufacturer said, the furniture trade must go on supplying its bread-and-butter lines until indications of a change in public demand are clearer; then he and his friends will have a go. Indeed, several are already having a go and are getting it wrong.

Perhaps the sorriest features of the exhibition were the half-baked attempts by the opportunists to "cash-in on contemporary." Many stands were showing reproduction contemporary, embodying all the more obvious and boring mannerisms of post-war design, exaggerating the angles of the legs, sharpening the contrasts in timber, bleaching and bending and tapering and routing without rhyme or reason other than the lure of fashion. One firm was even offering contemporary pieces with an antique finish - little bleached boxes on splayed stilts with corners and extremities rubbed and darkened. Such nonsense should make all who are interested in better furniture think again about the word "contemporary." As we said last year, the first call is for a new set of values in furniture: "Good furniture," we said, "is the product of honest workmanship, careful choice of right materials, considerate study of the consumers' needs and pocket, and only lastly of a sense for contemporary style."

After this year's disappointing show perhaps the most we should ask for is some decent furniture, irrespective of period or style. P. R.



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# Notebook

**OPPORTUNITY FOR DESIGN:** "We are in for a hard time in maintaining our export trade, let alone increasing it. The only way to succeed is to adapt our industries quickly to new demands and new markets."

The quotation is from the *Manchester Guardian's* leader of 13 March, surveying the country's post-Budget economic position. Design has a vital part to play in the adaptation which the *Guardian* calls for.

**BRIGHTER BUSINESS:** In recent years many companies, both in the United States and in the United Kingdom, have presented their annual reports and accounts in a more attractive form. We are glad to see British Industrial Plastics Ltd taking part in this movement; their *Annual Report 1950-51* is a very digestible document, nowhere so over-bright that it ceases to be recognisable as an Annual Report, but thoroughly readable as a result of its clean typography and layout. It contains some excellent factory photographs, too – to remind shareholders that the wealth of a great company must be reckoned in terms of men and machines as well as balance-sheets.

**PRIDE IN THEIR WORK:** Though it has no direct bearing on industrial design, a story from Trinidad is interesting as an indication of the workers' attitude in one industry. When it was decided to modernise the composing room in the Government Printing Office there, one man suggested that the room would be improved by a pictorial history of printing which would give a sense of dignity and pride in the craft. This suggestion, we read, "was taken up with enthusiasm, and the workers themselves wished to pay for it by contributing one hour's work from each month's wages for a period." The result was a decision to commission a mural showing 6000 years of printing history. The resulting design – by John Farleigh – has recently been on show at the Crafts Centre in London.

**NORTHERN v SOUTHERN TASTE:** A special correspondent of *The Cabinet Maker* started something when he remarked that "the most vulgar [furniture] designs achieve their greatest popularity in the North of England." Promptly there came a letter from W. J. Kape, Principal of the Shoreditch Technical College, in these terms: "I have recently moved to London from the West Riding of Yorkshire, where I spent twelve years, and I can assure him that low sales of furniture of good contemporary design in that part of the country are not entirely due to the depraved taste of its inhabitants. Two other factors are of equal importance.

"One, . . . the people seldom, if ever, see any good contemporary furniture. . . . Secondly, every conceivable barrier is placed in the way of young couples wishing to buy contemporary furniture. Some friends of mine tried to order a contemporary suite of dining-room furniture from the largest store in one of the largest towns of the West Riding. They had seen the suite illustrated in *DESIGN* and liked it. After doing his utmost to dissuade them, and making every effort to sell them a Jacobean suite, the salesman reluctantly agreed to try and obtain the suite in question – he said he thought he could promise delivery within three months. Actually, it was six months before it arrived. The reason for the delay? The manufacturers were flooded with orders for this particular suite which was 'very popular!'."

**TAILPIECE:** Caption on the back of a photograph submitted to *DESIGN*: "At the British Furniture Exhibition Mr H. Segal . . . placed a set of antique French table and three chairs in the centre of a display of his contemporary, functional kitchen furniture. This caught the eye and, by way of extreme contrast, drew attention to the modern design and finish of the kitchen cabinets." A.D.

---

**TRIUMPHAL WAY:** This year's Daily Mail *Ideal Home Exhibition* at Olympia gained new colour and liveliness from James Gardner's brilliant transformation of the Grand Hall, illustrated opposite.

On both sides of the main avenue, stands displaying well-designed furniture were the first to attract the visitor's attention. With the houses furnished for the Council of Industrial Design (*DESIGN*, February, page 32) they helped to give a contemporary air to the exhibition as a whole.

# Opportunities limited

Textile design and fashion design are overcrowded fields today; exceptional ability and personality are required for success. This article emphasises the need for young designers to know more about the ways in which fabric are made-up and used.

## 1: Textile design

DO ART SCHOOLS give too little attention to training their students in production techniques – or too much? The former view is widely held; the latter was put forward by John T. Murray, director of D. Whitehead Ltd, Rawtenstall, at a recent lunch-hour meeting of the Design and Industries Association. Their training, he said, often left design students “full of half-baked knowledge of such processes as printing, dyeing, and so on”; it was difficult enough to produce a

good artist, without weighing him down with miscellaneous information.

From a member of the audience came the almost inevitable comment that the manufacturer's usual reason for turning down students' designs is that they cannot be produced – not that they show lack of imagination. Dr Murray agreed with this view of the present state of affairs, but added that it could and should be remedied by the introduction into industry of a “missing link”, someone who could appreciate both

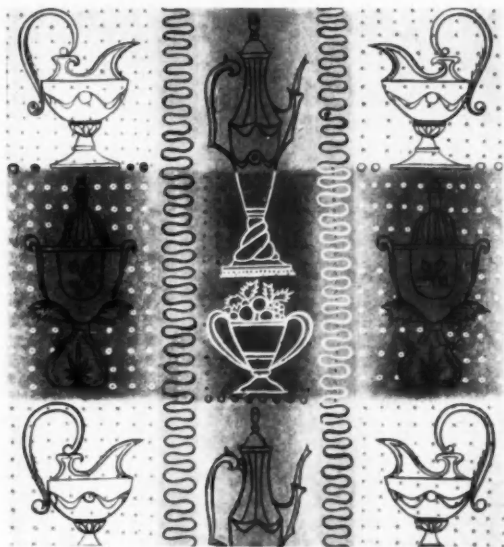
*All the illustrations accompanying this article show winning or commended designs from the Royal Society of Arts 1951 Industrial Art Bursaries competition.*



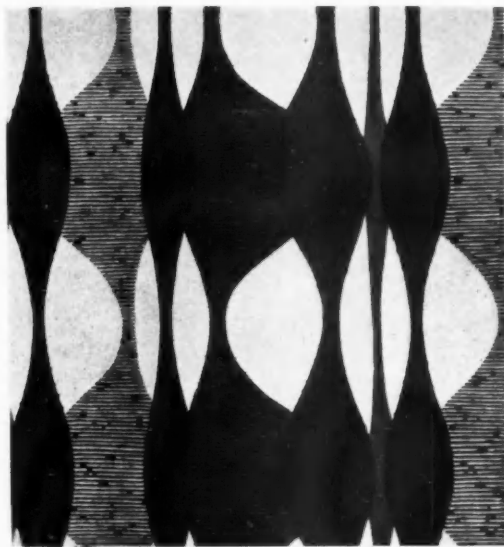
*Machine-printed glazed chintz in eight colours by Belinda Bleck (aged 20) of Brighton College of Arts and Crafts. Her design above was intended for chair covering and curtains in a first-class hotel. She was awarded the Sir Frank Warner Memorial Medal, as well as the furnishing textiles bursary.*



*The work of Eileen M. Bellamy (19) of Leeds College of Art impressed the jury particularly by its boldness of design; she was one of seven students commended in this section. Above, her Jacquard-woven material for nursery curtains, in fine wool; the warp, white; the weft, dark blue.*



Jacquard-woven cotton and rayon material intended for use in a fashionable restaurant, by John G. Vickers (19) of Blackpool Technical College and School of Art. In six colours, for a 50-inch wide material. Commended.



Also for a fashionable restaurant (one of the set tests in the competition): a woven curtain material in four shades of green, by Alan Price (25) of the School of Textile Design, Royal College of Art. Commended.

the manufacturer's and the designer's point of view. He had previously said that there were not enough people of this kind available today – "people who have been trained so that they can come into industry and convince the business man and the artist that neither of them is as stupid as the other seems to think."

*The large attendance at this DIA meeting was one sign of the wide current interest in the training of designers for textiles, and the opportunities awaiting them. Another sign is to be seen in the large volume of enquiries on this subject reaching the Council of Industrial Design, which has prepared the following statement on the present position:*

Textile design is an overcrowded field, in which there are openings only for genuine ability and personality. Today, a designer in the textile industries requires exceptional talent, technical knowledge and business aptitude, as well as versatility of style and the ability to assimilate and appreciate changes in fashion.

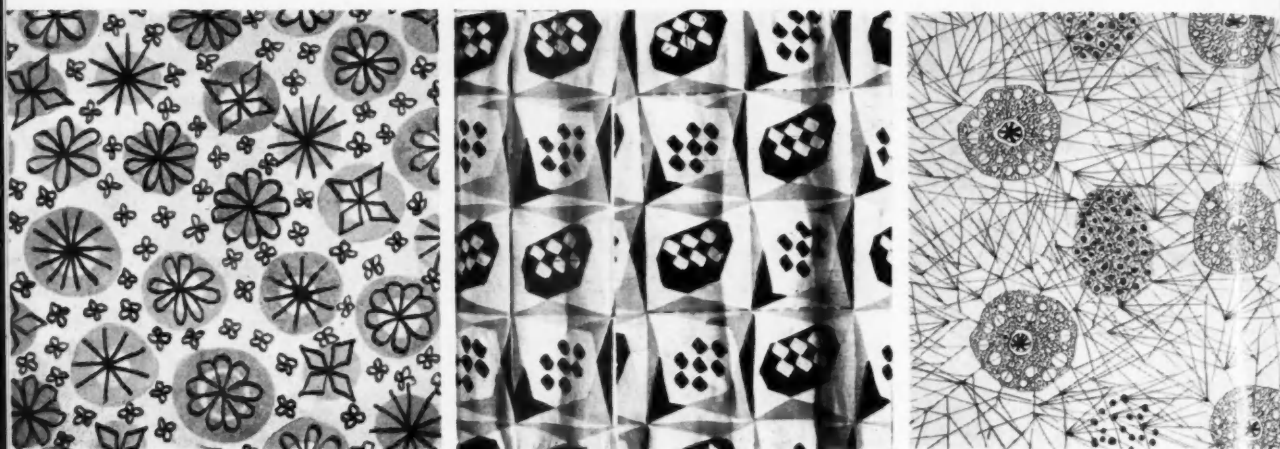
In so crowded a field it is almost impossible to give constructive advice to a young designer before he can show evidence of special talent: at an earlier stage, application to a local art school may have secured admission to a course of training, but no guarantee of subsequent employment can be inferred from this.

There is no recognised mode of entrance into the textile design field. Students may be trained at art

and technical colleges in design for either printed or woven fabrics. When their course is completed, it is sometimes possible for them to obtain employment through the school concerned, through the textile Design Centres, or as a result of making direct contact with firms. A number of firms who have their own design studios take on trainee designers, but these are as a rule under the age of 20: it is often the policy in such studios to employ young people who have had no recognised training in textile design. Their duties consist largely of re-drawing and colouring designs which have been purchased outside the studio; they provide little scope for creative work.

Commercial design studios exist in Manchester, London and other textile centres. These studios supply designs to the trade and, besides taking on young trainees, they are sometimes prepared to employ older artists who appear to be capable of providing the type of work which suits their customers. Here there is greater opportunity for creative work (though the employed artist seldom makes contact with the buyer of his designs).

Manufacturers and converters are often prepared to see collections of the work of a designer who is selling designs on a free-lance basis. If a designer is able to build strong contact with firms and knows their requirements and design handwriting, then free-lance



Three dress textile designs from the competition. Left and centre, children's dress fabrics by the two bursary winners in this section: Johanne Elisabeth Bierrum (23), LCC Central School of Arts and Crafts – a design for machine-printing in five colours on cotton or fine wool and cotton; and William Wilson (24), Gray's School of Art, Aberdeen – a four-colour block print on 36-inch white cotton. Right, design for a machine-printed rayon fabric for day wear, black on yellow; by Roger Ashton (24), Leicester College of Art; one of five students commended in this section. The jury's comment on Miss Bierrum's work – that it showed a different approach in designs for beachwear and for a child's dress, with each design entirely suitable for its purpose – underlines the view expressed in the accompanying article, that student designers must study the ways in which textiles are used, not only the ways in which they are made.

designing can provide fairly lucrative work. On the whole, however, a livelihood based on selling in this way is precarious.

The student designer should lose no opportunity of actually *handling* textiles – too many paper designs, of which students are proud, lack textile quality. A period spent in selling textiles may materially help a student to view his job realistically. He should try to imagine the suitability of his work to the various stages of production and sale; how the customer will first see the design; the type of person to whom it will appeal, and whether the cloth will be suited to his purse if it is produced as envisaged.

Study of the ways in which textiles are made and sold must be supplemented by a study of the ways in which they are used: in houses, ships, hotels and public buildings; by women for home dressmaking or home furnishing; by the making-up trade for ready-made clothing; by fashion houses for models. [Time and again, observers of student designers' work are forced to the conclusion that insufficient attention is paid to this aspect: for example, the *Report* on the RSA's Industrial Art Bursaries Competition of 1948 commented: "Generally, too much emphasis was put on the designs as such, and far too little attention paid to the use to which, if produced, they were to be put, e.g., the decoration of a home, hotel or ship – some of the designs being more suitable for posters." And the *Report* on the corresponding 1951 Competition quotes

the view of the jury for the men's-wear fabric section that candidates should "consider more carefully the purposes for which their designs were ultimately intended."]

## 2: Fashion design

If the subject of textile design can be relied on to produce some warmth of discussion, arguments about fashion design – the designing of garments, as distinct from the materials of which they are made – are frequently at blood heat. The Ministry of Education recently organised a short course for teachers of dress design, following "the catastrophic results of dress designers in the NDD [National Diploma in Design examinations] last year." This quotation is from the *Journal* of the National Society for Art Education\*, which contains a lively account of the course, with the following conclusions:

"Many of us have often discussed dress, but never have we had an opportunity of talking with those who are competent and experienced to deal with these matters.... Few of the dress people are aware of what the schools do, and only apparently one or two schools have acquired status locally or nationally. The last

\* February 1952; 25. (89 London Road, Leicester). The same issue includes also a note on the recent Birmingham D I A forum on the training of dress designers, and on Alison Settle's *Observer* report of the forum.



day [of the course] showed conclusively the gaps between the average teacher and those who . . . are right on top of this trade.

"It was obvious that by basic training and experience, few of us ought to be teaching dress design. We have little contact with industry, except at a distance. . . . All dress design should be centred in or near the manufacturing units."

*The Council of Industrial Design statement, quoted above in relation to textile design, makes these further comments on fashion design:*

Intending students who wish to take up this form of design often fail to realise that they have a choice of two careers, i.e., that of being a designer or designer-cutter for the wholesale trade, or that of model dress-making. There is a good opening for those working for the wholesale trade if they obtain knowledge of cutting for mass production, grading and sizing. (A further knowledge of American sizing is an advantage.) This experience is essential: without it there is little hope of success. There are several schools – one or two of them private – which are known to give the authentic training welcomed by the trade.

The couturiers' salons, where model dressmaking is done, are few; moreover, they are besieged by designers wishing to enter as trainees.

### 3: Fashion accessories

*The statement continues, with regard to the design of fashion accessories:*

Some forms of jewellery and leatherware must be regarded as fashion accessories. At present there is little effective link between the industries concerned and the *haute couture*, except through a few individual firms. The advanced training available at the Royal College of Art aims at closing this gap.

The talented free-lance has a good chance in the fashion accessories field, provided he or she has a developed fashion sense, a constant flow of suitable ideas, a good and varied knowledge of materials and production, and the craftsmanship to make first-class prototypes and perhaps even a small-scale "limited-edition" production. Technical proficiency of a high order is required, and this should be based on a feeling for, and personal practice in, good craftsmanship. Particular energy and enterprise are demanded by this type of one-man free-lance practice. A good basic art training in a school including a department of dress design is a good foundation, unless travel and study abroad can be undertaken. Even more than in most kinds of designing, the aspirant must have a clear objective and make his or her own pace.

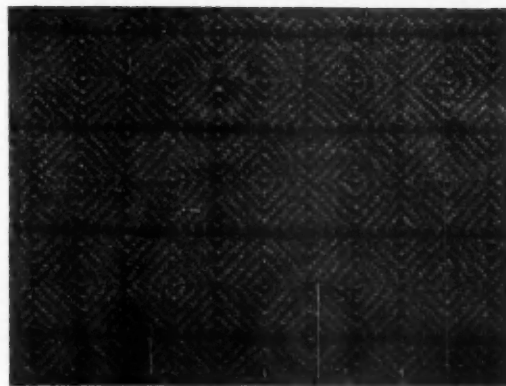
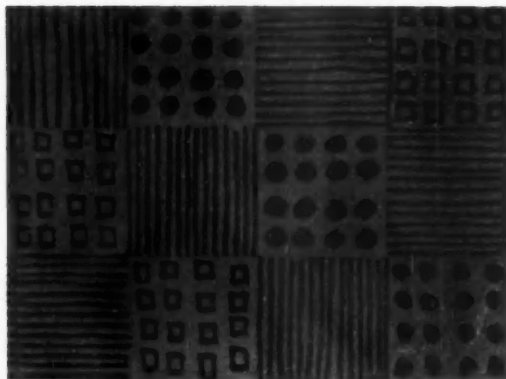
## POSTSCRIPT

### *on the Industrial Art Bursaries Competition*

THIS FURTHER INFORMATION can be added to the results of textile sections of the competition, incorporated in captions on pages 4 to 6 and below:

New sections had a mixed reception, with numbers of entrants ranging from one (domestic gas appliances) to 12 (PVC sheeting). In the latter section, two bursaries were awarded; another new section, for laminated plastics, attracted five candidates from two schools, but none of their designs was considered to merit an award. Men's wear fabrics attracted four candidates from three schools. Six students of the LCC Central School won seven bursaries out of a total of 17.

Winning and commended designs will be exhibited at the Royal Society of Arts, John Adam Street, WC2, from 19 to 30 May.



*Designs for a tie silk, above, and for a waistcoating cloth, by Johanne Bierrum of the Central School, who won the bursary in the men's-wear fabrics section. It was the first time such a section had been included in the Industrial Art Bursaries Competition; the number of students entering was not so high as the jury had hoped – and many entries (other than the winner's) were considered more suitable for women's wear than for men's. Once again, candidates were urged to consider more carefully the purposes for which their designs were ultimately intended.*



## DISTINCTIVELY

# Dolcis

An individual style is increasingly evident in the merchandise of this growing chain of shoe shops, and in its premises, display and advertising

FOR THE LORD MAYOR of a proud provincial city to describe any multiple store as an addition to its amenities must be an unusual, if not unique, event. It happened in the West Country in 1949, when Plymouth's first woman Lord Mayor opened, in the new Civic Centre, a Dolcis store which has taken the place of one destroyed by enemy action; she declared it "a great credit to Plymouth."

It is no accident that this unusual praise was bestowed on Dolcis, for this firm has an unusually progressive design policy and – partly, at least, as a result – an unusual amount of public goodwill.

In its own line, dealing mainly in women's fashion footwear, Dolcis was the biggest retail business in the country before the war. It has retained this position, and in the years since the end of the war, its profits have increased by more than 50 per cent; its shops have grown from 197 to 230; and a promising new

development has been the incorporation of a North American company, Dolcis (Canada) Ltd, which has made a start in establishing a chain of stores across Canada – a worth-while market, since Canadian women buy, on average, at least four pairs of shoes a year. Dolcis also has important trade connections in the USA, set up during recent years.

Over the last five years, Dolcis design standards have been rising. The *distinctively Dolcis* "hand-writing" has become increasingly evident.

The firm's design policy embraces better design both in merchandise and in presentation. As a step towards the former aim, there is now a design studio (described in *DESIGN*, June 1949, pages 14–15) at the Company's head office. Dolcis are primarily retailers, but their factories produce about 30 per cent of the footwear sold in the shops; the studio creates and adapts designs for this 30 per cent, and, even more important, it influences the design of the rest of Dolcis merchandise through close contact with more than 150 manufacturers (including those who make shoes for the new Dolcis market in Canada). The studio's services have also proved of great value to the Company in planning shoes and handbags as matching sets, in keeping with the current trend of fashion.

continued on page 10



Opened in February, Dolcis' "star" shop at 22 Old Bond Street is illustrated here. Its long, narrow shape presented special problems to the designer. The front part of the shop (left) displays fashion accessories as well as shoes; but most of the selling is done in the section shown on right, which is connected with the front by a mirror-lined corridor. One wall of this part of the shop (opposite camera) is also faced with mirror glass.

Dolcis staff architect, Ellis E. Somake, FRIBA. Shopfitters, Courtney Pope Ltd.



The high standard of Dolcis presentation is the result of a belief in, and insistence on, unity of style as between merchandise, window displays, store architecture and interiors – fully implemented by teamwork between the buying office, merchandise management, advertising manager, display manager and staff architect. The result of the combined efforts of these departments is seen in the Dolcis stores: it is evidence not only of their specialised skills but that they work together as a team.

Besides selling footwear for men, women and children – with an increasing tendency to sell men's shoes in separate self-contained departments – Dolcis have developed the sale of stockings and lingerie and handbags through their ancillary business, Dolores. And Dolcis ownership of a large Oxford Street building, in which one of the firm's biggest branches is situated, brings them into the restaurant and service flat business. These additional activities provide additional opportunities for good design; and today the opportunities are taken.



*Typical of the care which Dolcis give to all aspects of design was the commissioning of Victor Steibel to design a new uniform for salesgirls at the Old Bond Street shop. The resulting dress, shown above, is in all-wool alpaca; the colour is a warm carbon grey. Even the Evening News found space to comment on this innovation, when reporting the display of new footwear with which the shop opened.*

Though many people in the Dolcis organisation have a hand in carrying-out the design policy, its recent development must be attributed largely to F. J. Stratton, Chairman and Managing Director. How Mr Stratton first became interested in footwear, and in design, is a longish story, but a story that is worth telling as British business is not yet suffering from a surplus of design-minded chairmen.

Francis John Stratton was born in Cambridgeshire in 1906, and he began his business career with the Eastern Telegraph Company – in Portugal, Gibraltar and other places on the shores of the Mediterranean. He returned to his native county as an undergraduate, and read for the English and Archaeological & Anthropological Triposes. His choice of subject for a thesis was unusual but indicative of things to come: "Art and Ferro-concrete."

When he left the university Mr Stratton's aim was to become a Director of Education, and he had a brief spell of schoolmastering in Derbyshire. But he turned his back on this idea when an opportunity arose of joining Lewis's Ltd, in Liverpool, as assistant Staff Manager.

Later, in the middle 'thirties, when Lewis's were first experimenting with their "Design for Living" departments, he was appointed assistant general manager of their Birmingham store, with special responsibility for those departments concerned with women's fashions, including footwear.

As a Territorial Army officer, Major Stratton began the war in a Midland anti-aircraft unit, but from this he was transferred to the Ministry of Supply. He eventually ended his war service – which brought him a CBE in 1948 – as Controller of Footwear and Leather at the Board of Trade, and in 1945 he led a mission to investigate the German footwear industry.

Various post-war prospects, in and out of industry, lay before him when he chose the appointment of managing director of Upsons Ltd, the Dolcis Shoe Company, and director of its associated companies. Early in the present year he succeeded T. N. Bird, on retirement, as Chairman.

Besides being chairman of the Footwear Distributors' Joint Council (which negotiates with the Board of Trade on matters affecting the industry), F. J. Stratton is, in a wider field, a member of the Council of Industrial Design and the independent member of the National Advisory Council for the Motor Manufacturing Industry.

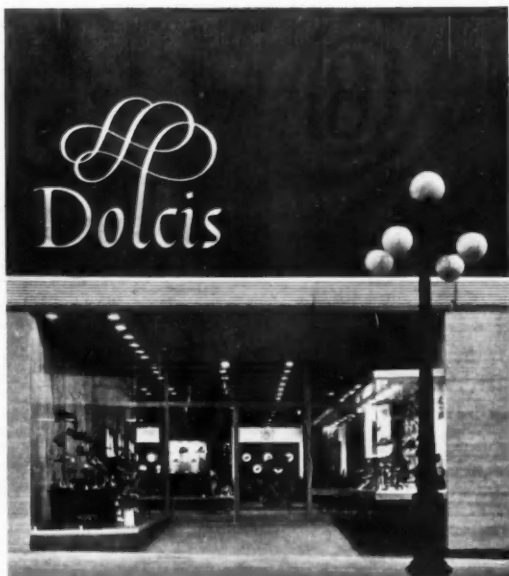
While he is too much of a realist to claim that the Company's increasing prosperity over the last five years is due wholly to its increasing interest in design, it is undeniable that the two have grown side by side.



A new style of lettering for the Dolcis name has been evolved, on the advice of Sir Francis Meynell, RDI, by Reynolds Stone. Typical of his distinctive "engraved calligraphy", this style is already used in a remarkably wide range of applications. Our headline on page 8 shows its simplest form; beside the Old Bond Street shop window (also page 8) it is incised in a marble panel and gilded; on the Canadian fascia, below left, it is cut-out in metal. Other uses range from book-match covers, on which it is successfully reversed, white against a dark brown background, and export cases for shoes, above. In this application, the dissection of the letters into strokes for stencilling has changed their character less than one might expect.



F. J. Stratton, CBE, managing director of the Dolcis Shoe Company (Upsons Ltd) since 1946, was recently appointed chairman also. His interest in design is evident alike in the conduct of the Dolcis business and in his membership, since 1947, of the Council of Industrial Design. He serves as a member of the Council's Information Committee.



The first Dolcis shop in Canada was opened last summer in Toronto, and the second (shown here) in Ottawa. These branches are intended for a West End type of trade; their merchandise includes Swiss and English fashion shoes by Bally; "typically British" walking shoes; men's shoes, in American widths, from Dolcis' own factories at Kettering; and the products of selected Canadian manufacturers.



The Dolcis design studio for shoes and handbags - at the firm's head office in The Borough - was described in *DESIGN* for June 1949. It co-operates closely with outside manufacturers who supply footwear to Dolcis, besides originating designs for production in the firm's own factories. Eunice Wilson, MSIA, is the Dolcis staff designer. The studio is now concerned with designs for Canada as well as the home market.

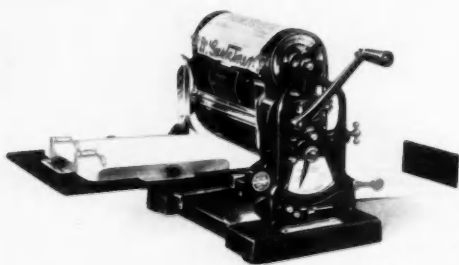
## Twenty years of industrial design

Gestetner Ltd have an unusually long record of collaboration with their consultant designer

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE to describe in a few lines a company which has been making duplicators for over 70 years and exports them from England to almost all parts of the world; but it would be unprofitable to discuss any company's design policy without knowing something about the company itself, so the attempt must be made. Gestetner Ltd was founded by David Gestetner, who came from Hungary to England by way of New York and in 1881 invented the stencil duplicating process; his son, Sigmund Gestetner, is the company's very active head today. The Gestetner factory at Tottenham is unique in the variety of operations carried out there. The equipment ranges from injection moulding machines for plastics to pressure

die-casting machines and printing presses (both letterpress and lithographic, incidentally). Even the felt which is used in the duplicator rollers is made on the premises. The number of "bought out" components in Gestetner products is very small; there are practically no components whose design is not under the firm's control.

The wide range of plant is equalled by the variety of human resources available on the spot. There is a fair-sized drawing office, an experimental workshop for the production of prototypes, and a series of laboratories for research and testing. With all this specialised ability on the pay-roll, Gestetner's were nevertheless ahead of most firms in seeing the need for the



Above, Gestetner's first rotary duplicator, the No. 3 model. Introduced in 1903, it was followed by the first self-feeding model (No. 6) in 1906, and by an electrically-operated machine (No. 15) soon afterwards. Many improvements were made to these models; in 1926 they were known as the Gestetner Ream and Ream Electric respectively.

This is Raymond Loewy's description of the Gestetner machine as he saw it, right, in 1929: "perched too high on four spindly legs that suddenly spread out in panic as they approached the earth. A flimsy tray stuck in front of it like a black tongue, and on its side it had a most regrettable crank. Two wheels with S-shaped spokes (the artistic touch, no doubt) were held together by a fat leather belt. . . . Spinners, springs, levers, gears, caps, screws, nuts and bolts were covered with a mysterious bluish down that looked like the mould on tired Gorgonzola. It was only a blend of paper dust and ink vapour. It was a sad machine, really, in spite of some gold striping that failed to lift its morale."





addition of an industrial designer's services. They have moreover used the services of the *same* industrial designer for over twenty years.

That designer is Raymond Loewy. Gestetner was his first product-design client, and was largely responsible for the opening of a London office of Raymond Loewy Associates in the mid-1930's.

As with so many other companies, the consistent design policy of Gestetner reflects its head's personal interest in design. Sigmund Gestetner was trained as an engineer; he has spent his whole business life with the company and has by force of circumstances become an able administrator and business man; but he has always had an interest in the design of industry's products and a realisation of its importance in an increasingly industrialised world. The opportunity of improving on the accepted standards of the day first became clear to him in the early 1920's, when he met a group of designers in Paris who "styled" (as the motor industry would say today) some of the best cars for American manufacturers of the period. Later, on a visit to the United States, he met Raymond Loewy, who had left France for America some 10 years earlier, and had been practising as a fashion artist, commercial artist and display designer: Loewy has recorded (in

his autobiography *Never leave well enough alone*\*) that Mr Gestetner showed him a photograph of his product, and this conversation followed:

"Mr Loewy," he said, "do you think you could improve the appearance of this machine?"

"Certainly" . . .

"How much will it cost?"

I hesitated a second. "Two thousand dollars."

"And if I don't like it?"

"You *will* like it."

"I believe I will. Yet, supposing I can't use the design?"

"Then I will charge you for the cost only, say five hundred."

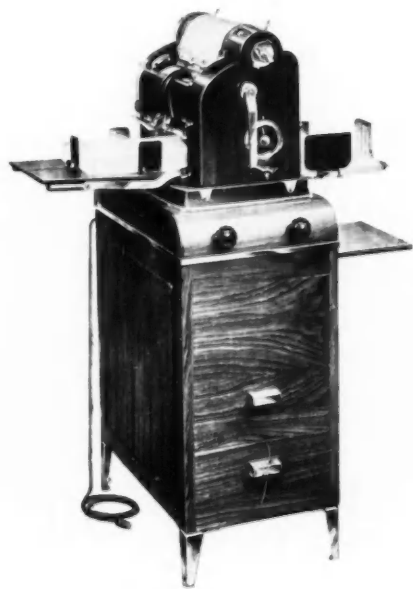
"Righto, but I am sailing in five days and I'd like to see the design before I leave."

"Okay, you'll see it within three days." . . .

In such limited time, Loewy could do no more than "a face-lift job" (his own phrase):

I would simply encase all the gadgety organs of the machine within a neat, well-shaped, and easily removable shell. . . . I proceeded to stack up plastic clay over the machine, and progressively I ar-

\* Published by Simon and Schuster, New York, 1951.



The result of an industrial designer's approach — the first Gestetner model designed by Loewy, produced early in the 1930's (No. 66). Basic principles were unchanged, but innovations were made which improved the performance of the machine as well as its appearance.

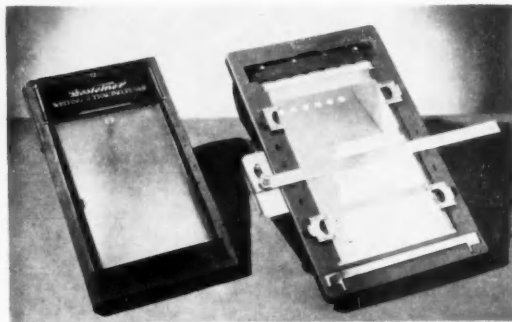


Gestetner's latest, the 160 Express Inker. Metal has replaced plastics in the machine's cover-plates and wood in the cabinet on which it stands. Industrial designers, Raymond Loewy Associates.

rived at a form which enclosed everything that could be enclosed. I gradually improved that shape until I reached a form that seemed to me to be simple, practical and attractive. . . . After successive minor improvements the duplicator was ready. . . . Sig-mund crated it and shipped it, clay and all, back to his works in London.

This admittedly superficial styling job began a period of closer collaboration between manufacturer and designer which still continues. No new product is introduced by Gestetner without the Loewy organisation contributing in greater or lesser degree to its design. The firm's latest duplicator, the *160 Express Inker*, is again a Loewy design. Its basic method of operation is the same as in David Gestetner's first hand-fed rotary duplicator of 1903, but a progressive tidying-up of form is immediately evident when old and new duplicators are seen side by side. Its name refers to the method of controlled inking by vacuum pump: the ink is placed in position in the machine in its tube; from this, the rollers are inked by pressing a lever. With its extensive use of diecastings and metal pressings, and its silvery-grey Dimenso finish, the new model is a notable example of design planned in full knowledge of the production facilities available – without allowing them to determine the appearance of the product.

It is worth noting that although Raymond Loewy Associates are the only consultants for the main Gestetner products, the company has from time to time



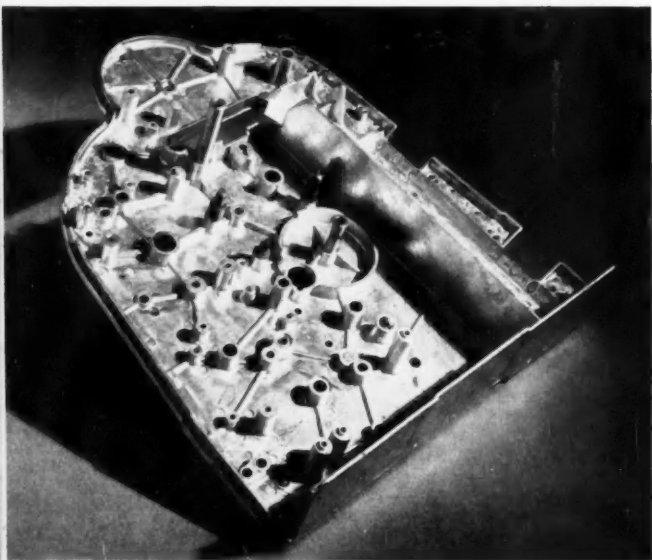
As this photograph suggests, the Gestetner Scope (right) is more complex than the wooden frame which it replaced. Basically, their purpose is the same – to make it practicable to draw or trace illustrations, charts or lettering on a Gestetner stencil, in conjunction with typed wording. Added complexity has added a number of advantages in use; the angle of the frame has been made adjustable; the lamp housing underneath the frame is protected; there are spring clips at the sides and a retaining clamp at the base, to hold the stencil firmly in position. The steel T-square can be locked on to any side of the frame.

used the services of other designers in its sales-aids and advertising material: a large and impressive sign at the Tottenham works was designed by John Armstrong, who has also produced advertising symbols for the company.

The latest Gestetner directors' report states that in the year under review, both home and export sales showed very substantial increases. It continues: "The percentage of your company's products exported was higher than ever before. The value and volume of shipments to hard-currency countries were extremely gratifying and exceeded your directors' expectations." How close is the connection between the design of the product and Gestetner's steadily mounting sales? Many factors besides design are reflected in the shape of the sales curve but, in the words of the works manager, "there is no doubt whatsoever that the new design has helped to overcome competition"; he emphasises the fact that any conspicuous improvement in the appearance of the product has a stimulating effect on the sales force. With an almost world-wide force of sales representatives, selling direct to users, their heightened enthusiasm for the product would alone go some way towards justifying the company's thought for design.

A. D.

Improvements in the design of the Gestetner duplicator have been made possible by improved production facilities available at the factory. This complex shape, incorporating bearings and stiffening webs, is a standard (or end-plate) for the 160 model. Cast in zinc-base alloy, with seven hardened steel inserts, it is made in a single operation in a 400-ton Madison Kipp pressure diecasting machine.



# 'International Window Display'

reviewed by **W. M. de Majo**, MBE, MSIA

A GRAPHIS BOOK edited by Walter Herdeg, *International Window Display*, is of the high standard which we have come to expect from all Graphis publications. It has now been published in London by Cassell and Co Ltd, who have exclusive rights for the British Commonwealth. The price here is 60s.

As far as can be ascertained, this is the first post-war book on window display, an important subject which in the past has been neglected. There are 276 pages filled with reproductions of the world's foremost window displays, accompanied by brief introductory and explanatory copy in English, French and German. While an attempt has been made to catch the spirit of the subject by the introduction of some half-dozen full-colour plates, the reader is left yearning for more; but he has to be satisfied with black-and-white half-tone reproductions which, though of high quality, can hardly do credit to the most colourful of all commercial arts.

Sections are devoted to France, Great Britain, Italy, Switzerland, the United States and other countries; there are also chapters on display units, interior display, mannequins and paper sculpture.

The text and photographs confirm one's opinion that the art of window display in France is left to the amateur, imbued with natural talent and exquisite taste, while in Great Britain, Switzerland, Sweden and the United States, it is on a more soundly organised basis, in the hands of professional window display artists and designers. In Italian display the architect's view seems to prevail – though the illustrations in this section do not support the views expressed in the introductory copy. The lack of imaginative displays of high standard in other countries is apparent from this book.

In designed displays, Great Britain, Switzerland and Sweden are the leading countries today, while America has become the master of dramatised merchandising displays. One cannot fail to conclude that the best displays are those sponsored by companies which give display the prominence it deserves, backed by a reasonable budget and an integrated design policy.

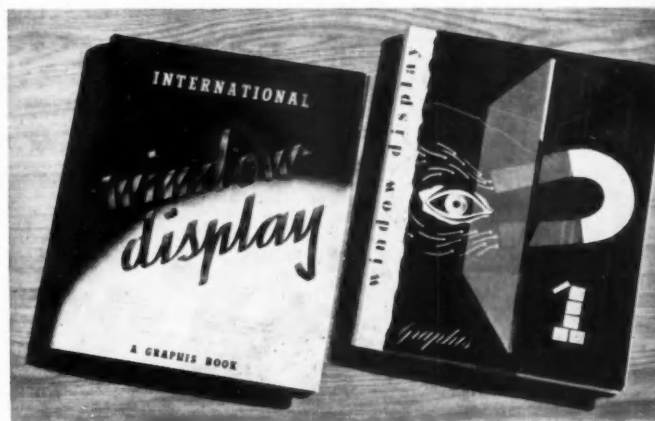
It is disappointing to notice that practically *all* good window displays in *all* countries except, perhaps, Switzerland, appear in the capitals' main shopping-streets. One can only hope that in time the brilliant lead given by some of the prominent stores and manufacturers will be followed by the at present less enterprising firms in suburbs and provinces.

It becomes obvious that Britain's strength is better represented in the display-unit section of the book than in the window-display section; for a nation of shopkeepers, most of our window displays are too dull and dreary for words.

While I realise that it is impossible to cover such a vast subject comprehensively in less than 300 pages, I feel that some space should have been devoted to the important subject of lettering in window display. The book jacket for the British edition, unlike the original Swiss design by Donald Brun, must be criticised; it is dull and unimaginative.

*International Window Display* will no doubt become a valuable reference book for retail store executives, manufacturers, display artists and designers.

*Dust jackets for the British (below, left) and Swiss editions of the book reviewed here. Reproduction fails to do justice to the gay colours of the Swiss design.*



# Car design for world markets

Are British cars bought because of their appearance – or in spite of it ?

by George Williams, MSIA

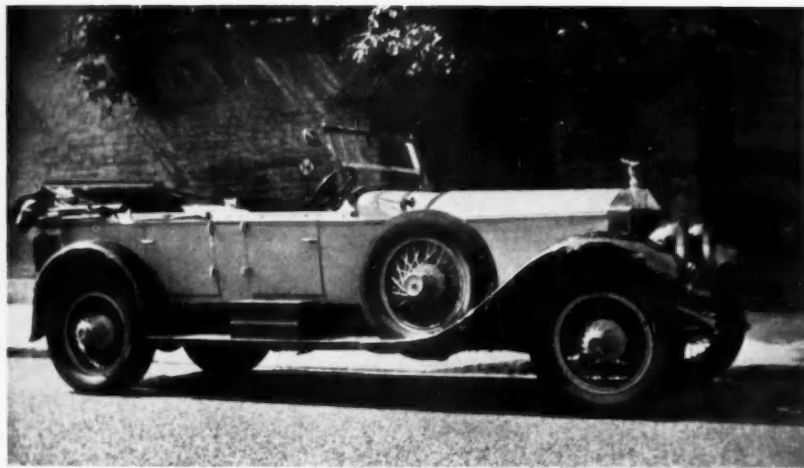
*This article is an extract from George Williams's paper on "Design in [Land] Transport," presented to the Institute of Transport on 24 March. Mr Williams, an Industrial Officer of the CoID, was introduced by Gordon Russell, its Director, who also read a short paper.*

EDITOR

THE APPEARANCE-DESIGNER of the motorcar is rarely on common ground with the engineer, who has achieved the mass production of an extremely efficient and economic machine at a comparatively low

basic cost. If the British motor industry is to maintain its high export figure, consideration of the real requirements of world markets is most important, yet there is still confusion and futile discussion of such terms as "contemporary design," "national trends," and "traditional style" – futile, because they mean different things to different people.

Tradition must obviously have its place in design. In cars, as in other products, it is important, but nowadays it is often either purposely ignored in a search for "the modern idiom," or else it is misinterpreted.



*"We often jump to the conclusion that a vertical radiator grille is an important English characteristic . . . but it is a matter of type rather than nationality."*

*Above, Rolls-Royce of about 1923; and, right, the radiator of the Mercedes-Benz Type 220, a post-war German model.*



*"To find a satisfactory use of the vertical grille in a truly contemporary manner, we have to look at Italian designs." This SIATA coupé was exhibited at the Geneva Show last year.*

Without giving the matter serious thought, we often jump to the conclusion that a vertical radiator grille, for instance, is an important English characteristic. It is, essentially, no more an English characteristic than any other nation's. The question of horizontal or vertical grilles is international, not national; the answer depends on the type of car and its own particular traditions. Expensive luxury cars with a long tradition of quality and performance have good reason to retain the vertical grilles by which the public has come to recognise and admire them. England has rather more cars of this type than other countries, certainly, but it is a matter of type rather than nationality.

A vertical grille can look perfectly satisfactory, but too often a practically unaltered pre-war design is maintained in combination with some indifferent form of wing and body treatment. To find a satisfactory use of the vertical grille in a truly contemporary manner, we have to look at various Italian designs (Farina, Ghia, the 1951-52 SIATA) or at the Bristol. The first-mentioned are all sports cars, but they provide object-lessons which could be satisfactorily applied in the design of any car.

Since the late nineteen-thirties there have been few good national characteristics in the appearance of English cars, because the new problems arising from the more complex body designs, which themselves came with mass-produced presswork, demanded the attention of the expert industrial designer – and he was virtually non-existent.

If we turn to English cars of 1920-36 for a yardstick of desirable characteristics, we think of such models as the 1c Mans Bentley, the Aston Martin, Lagonda, MG, Alvis Speed Twenty saloon, 30/98

Vauxhall, Talbot, Rover. In many of these cars, recognised today as classics of design, we see a general compactness and complete absence of frills; a feeling of lightweight efficiency; perfection of a particular body style, rather than continued novelty, resulting in considerable subtlety of detail; the sleek effect of a pronounced horizontal line in bonnet, roof, waist and sill – strangely refreshing when compared with the affected falling lines of today; and excellent frontal composition of lamps, grille and wings.

Above all, there is a feeling of harmony, with little trace of indecision. This is design tradition at its best, of which we could make good use in the future. We should not copy the past, but apply the same basic principles. Equally, we should not copy impractical Italian features belonging exclusively to sports cars, but we should adopt the Italians' approach to the problem of design – the sleek, light, compact and unaffected appearance developed from a study of curvature and the matching of radii of sections through wings, bonnet and roof. Can we admire the lines of Pinin Farina coachwork on a British chassis without comparing it rather wistfully with the standard product which we hope to continue to sell to the world?

Again, we do not want American styling – the over-ornate, the heavily rounded curve – and I do not uphold American cars as ideal, because in appearance some of them are bad; but we should learn from the practical features of American cars. Many points in their design are the result of logical development. (Some of them, of course, have appeared on British cars during the past few years.) American full-width bodies make the best use of a given wheel-track and the blending of wing into body. This is aesthetically



an advantage because the horizontal line developed is in harmony with the corresponding lines of sill, waist-line, wings and roof. The practice of providing a false wing line, downswept across the side of a full-width body, is perhaps one of the worst errors of present-day car design – a bad attempt to introduce so-called traditional characteristics.

Full-width bodies with built-in wings also enable headlamps to be placed wide apart and built-in. They have sometimes been attacked on the grounds that they involve high repair costs. The larger areas are perhaps more vulnerable, but there is now a praiseworthy tendency towards smaller panels with open joints for easy removal, and repair is often *less* costly owing to the simplicity of contour and shallow depth of draw in pressing.

The elimination of the wing as a separate unit makes for economy in manufacture, strength and rigidity, and ease of cleaning by the abolition of the cat-walk (the space between the old separate wing and the body). These conditions result in one blending form instead of three separate shapes – the radiator and two wings. The resultant larger frontal area can if necessary be relieved in a dozen different ways by well-designed air-intake apertures, without resorting to the dollar grin. This feature of the American car – though often contributing to improved engine accessibility by encouraging a wider bonnet opening – has earned ridicule by the addition of showy ornament to a form which otherwise shows a very highly developed knowledge of shaping.

The American designer is extremely competent in providing good section-contours through grille bars,

and other details which have great individual character; but they are often lost in a welter of gadgetry whose total effect is bad. Perhaps this is another example of the competent designer being dominated by the super-salesman. Such examples occur again and again in the restyling of American cars.

The British motor industry has over the past 20 years made a name for itself in what is potentially the most important market of all, with the small, economical and practical car – the type of car in which good industrial design is of the highest importance; and it may be argued that a good enough answer to the critics of our post-war design policy exists in the fact that Britain exports more vehicles than any other country in the world; but I believe that our export figure has been achieved not because of the appearance of our cars but in spite of it, and that our success, particularly in the United States, has three main causes:

1. *Mechanical efficiency.* In performance, reliability and economy in use, the British medium-priced car has no equal.
2. *Variety of types.* No other country produces so many models.
3. *Prestige.* Our reputation in world markets is still high. Considerable social cachet abroad is attached to the possession and understanding of European tastes, and well-designed quality goods exported by Britain are much sought-after.

If we are to make progress in design – and progress is vital to success in world markets – we must first examine the cause of our apparent failure in this respect. It is, I believe, a consequence of designing by



Photographs on this page and on page 17, copyright The Autocar

*"We should not copy impractical Italian features belonging exclusively to sports cars, but we should adopt the Italians' approach to the problem of design." Above, a Ferrari coupé of 1950.*

committee, a fault which is not confined to the motor industry. To design any product is a team job, but the team must be properly constituted – a team which can work freely within its terms of reference, and mould the various requirements into an integrated design with the knowledge that its work is to be studied critically by an appropriate board, uninfluenced by prejudice in any one direction. Appearance-design, or so-called “styling,” too often reflects the whim of the director (or his wife) and the salesman – the amateur designer and pseudo-stylist, to whom the addition of adornment is the best way of marching with the times, the obvious answer to his competitors’ excursions into the unreal.

Where design is displeasing, it is usually because too much attention of the wrong kind, rather than too little of any kind, has been paid to it. Meaningless chromium hieroglyphics on vehicle bodies, tasteless interiors, pointless elaborations on an often satisfactory basic design – these are the pitfalls.

The answer, as the transport speakers at last year’s Design Congress agreed, is to see that a pleasing appearance is evolved at the first inception of the project, as an integral part of it. The appearance-designer must work with the engineer from the beginning, and it is the responsibility of those at the head of the undertaking to see that the most favourable conditions prevail throughout the partnership. In the words of Dante Giacosa, Fiat’s Director of Engineering, “a design is good when it produces a feeling of true balance between art and engineering, and it is the responsibility of the high-level management of the company to see that this is achieved.”



*Top of page: the first post-war Rover car.*

*Centre: the same manufacturer's 1950 model.*

*Bottom: the 1952 Rover 75 – first exhibited at the Swiss Motor Show, Geneva, which opened on 20 March.*



When the second of these models replaced the first, in October 1949, DESIGN was justifiably critical of the new frontal appearance. Now the Rover Company is to be complimented on the return to sanity evident in the appearance-design of the latest model. Narrow vertical slats replace wide horizontal louvers; the Cyclops-eye headlamp has been eliminated, and the air intake for the ventilating system moved to top rear of the bonnet. “Tradition” evidently implies, for this manufacturer, logical development rather than a refusal to break with established practice.

# Designing a range of bathroom fittings

*The story of the Masque range of bathroom fittings might serve as a textbook example of close collaboration at all stages between the manufacturers and their consultant designers. Unfortunately, for reasons beyond the control of either, it is a story without a happy ending. Launched in 1950, the range sold well as long as it could be sold at all, but restrictions on the use of zinc alloy in consumer goods have put an end to its production – temporarily, at least.*

EDITOR

THE PRINCIPLE OF concealed fixing for bathroom wall-fittings, although fairly common in America, has not yet been widely used in Britain. When W. C. Youngman Ltd decided to introduce a range of die-cast bathroom fittings based on this method of fixing, Scott-Ashford Associates, the designers whom they commissioned, had before them a twofold challenge: to achieve a neat and simple device for concealed fixing which would not add too much to the cost of the product; and to design fittings which, in their appearance, would emphasise the absence of screw-holes.

For concealed fixing, a small plate is screwed on to the wall: the fitting slips over it, locking on to it and held firmly in position by means of an unobtrusive set-screw. Bayonet lugs, locking bevels or dowels may be used.

In this case, a rectangular wall-plate with two dowels on the upper edge, covered by a recessed plate of similar proportions but slightly crowned and having gently curved sides, was chosen – because the designers wanted (a) to make the fitting secure, particularly along the horizontal axis, by ensuring that as much of the wall-plate as possible supported it; (b) to enable the fixing screws to be set well apart; (c) to provide a

not-too-exacting standard of manufacturing tolerances; and (d) to avoid the need for complicated tools.

At first, Youngmans were undecided whether or not to associate the new fittings with an established range which they were already producing, and for this reason some of the designers' original suggestions for the back-plate included a conspicuous band of three parallel lines which identified that range. This idea was eventually abandoned.

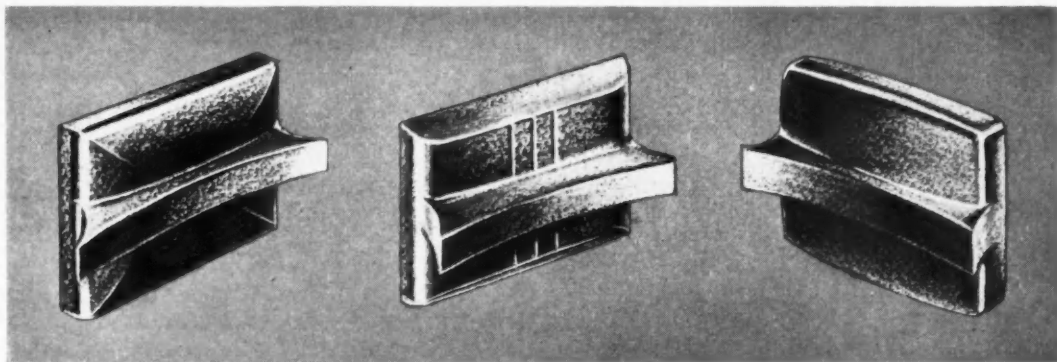
It was regarded as essential that the fitting should spring equally well from the horizontal or the vertical axis of its plate, and that it should look neat when mounted in such a position that only the top half of the plate could be seen.

The final design was modelled in Plasticine, and plaster casts were also made to enable the designers to check various points, including the appearance on a wall. Perspective drawings were made of all the proposed fittings.

Additions to the range of fittings originally proposed by the manufacturers which Scott-Ashford



*The method of fixing the Masque bathroom fittings is simple. The wall-plate, with two dowels on its upper edge, is screwed to the wall; then the back-plate of the fitting, which has recesses to accommodate the dowels, slips over it and is "locked" in position by a set-screw in its lower edge.*



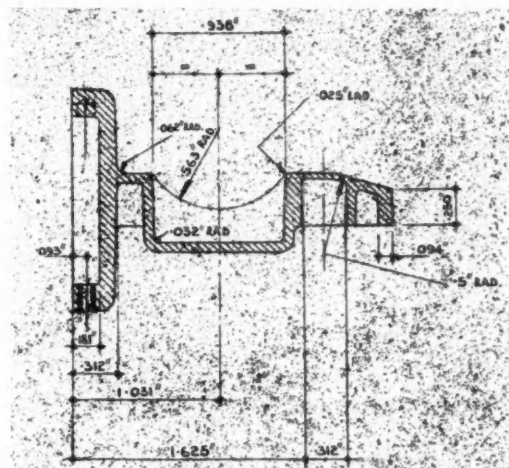
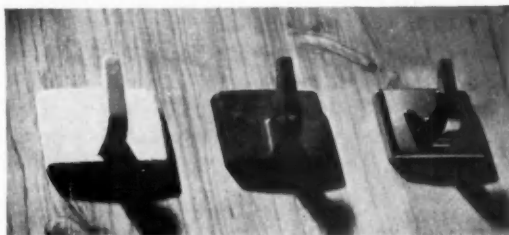
Associates suggested and designed were a toothbrush holder with space for a tube of paste or tin of dentifrice, and a fitting to take a denture bath and plate brushes.

Details incorporated in the designs included bevelled front edges to toothbrush holders, to ensure that the area of contact between the bristle and the fitting was as small as possible, allowing air to reach all the bristles, and raised nibs on the soap dish for a similar purpose.

The flow of metal within the tool, the "throw" in the plating baths, and the size and manipulation of polishing mops were all borne in mind when designing each fitting.

When the range of Masque fittings was finally decided upon and their designs approved, complete production drawings were made by the designers – whose work at all stages was made easier by the enthusiastic co-operation of the manufacturers, their production staff, and the toolmakers.

Scott-Ashford also developed a packaging scheme for the new range. The first step in this direction was

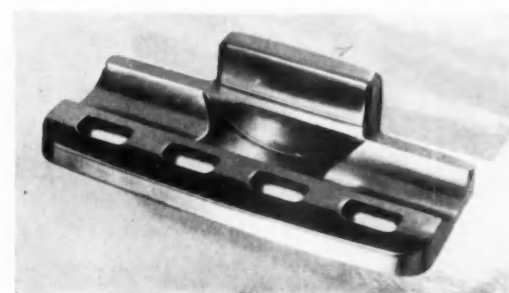


*Illustrations on this page (top to bottom):*

*Perspective drawings showing three possible forms for the back-plate, which were considered at an early stage in the design. The first was rejected because polishing would have destroyed its crisp mitres. The second was designed with a parallel-line motif to associate the fittings with an existing range by the same makers, but the firm decided not to stress this association. The third design was chosen because its shape was liked and because it was easy to cast, plate and polish.*

*Plaster model used in the design of the coat hook, shown alongside the hook before plating (centre) and the finished version.*

The consultant designers' brief included the production of working drawings for all fittings. A cross-section from their drawings for the toothbrush holder with space for a tube of paste or tin of dentifrice, is shown above a photograph of the holder itself.



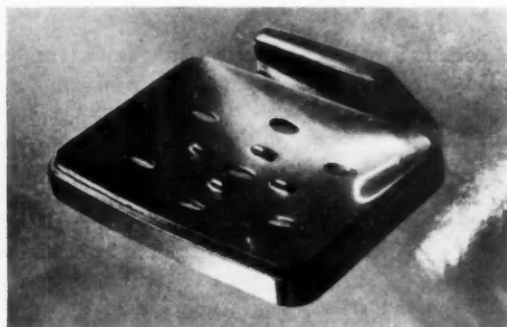
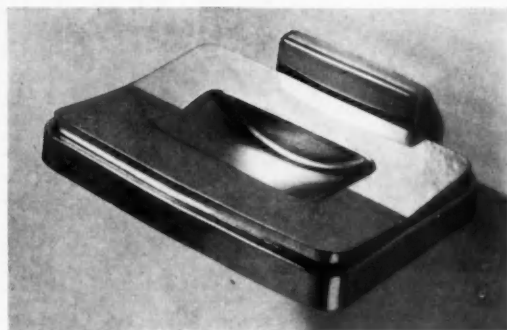
to determine the smallest number of sizes of carton required. Six sizes, having one or more dimensions in common, were ultimately chosen: this degree of standardisation assisted stacking and made a compact parcel of the stock order with which the line was launched.

A simple design embodying a white panel of the size and shape of the back-plate, on a green ground, was evolved. The name of the fitting with its list number was given on each end flap, with space left for retailers' markings. On the bottom of the carton was printed a "paper pattern" – a diagram of the wall-plate, to be torn off and used as a template – together with instructions for fixing and a list of the complete range of fittings.

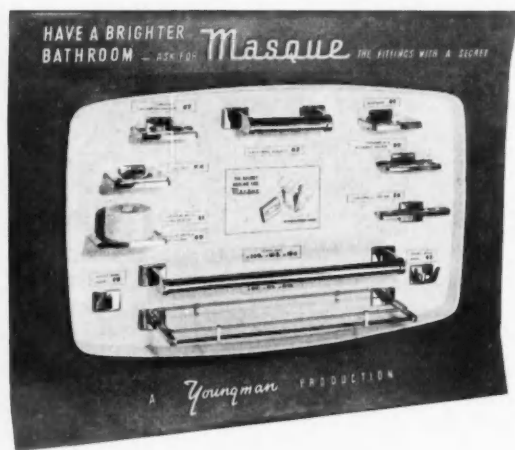
In addition to the items which were small enough to be conveniently packed in cartons, the range included glass shelves of various lengths, which were packed in corrugated cardboard sleeves, and towel-rails, which were wrapped in paper with labels in the same style as the carton.

A display board, to hang or stand, was designed in this style also. Displays were sent out with the fittings in place, in a corrugated fibreboard container specially arranged to cushion the glass shelf.

The range was launched at the British Industries Fair in 1950, and was an instant success, orders for nearly all fittings keeping well ahead of the supply of castings – the limiting factor in production – so long as the Masque range could be produced.



Both the ash tray and the soap dish in the fittings, above, lift out for easy cleaning. The remaining parts of these two fittings are identical.



Left, display board for use in a shop-window or on a counter. Right, packs in the same colour scheme – green, black and white. After the drawings for these cartons left the designers' hands, it was found necessary to change the name originally proposed for the range. The name "Masque," which was chosen, was then incorporated instead: as a result the style and position of the lettering may not be exactly what was intended in the first place.



## Making the most of synthetic resin glues

GOOD DESIGN is the material supplier's business as well as the end-product manufacturer's: the appropriate use of his materials in well-designed goods is the best advertisement he can have. This has been our belief since DESIGN's earliest issues – a belief which has not been shaken by the tardiness of many material suppliers to support it.

British Resin Products Ltd, makers of *Cellobond* synthetic resin adhesives, have now joined the select minority spending time, thought and money on the design of prototypes which will demonstrate new ways of using their materials. The first results of this policy were seen on their stand at the Furniture Exhibition, in a group of unit furniture with covered joints, and a wall made of corrugated plywood.

The firm's argument in favour of the grouped furniture is that its independent units have the appearance of a single whole, thanks to the use of an outer cover (*cladding*, in current jargon) round the sides, and cover-strips at the front. These components are designed to be supplied in lengths appropriate to the grouping adopted, and easily fitted. The cladding is patterned with crosswise grooves, spaced at regular intervals, to make joins as inconspicuous as possible. (These grooves are just visible on the right-hand end of the units shown in our photograph.)

British Resin Products' interest in this system of unit-furniture assembly is implied in their comment that the efficiency of the adhesive used is all-important.

It is equally important in the corrugated plywood. Many uses for this material can be foreseen, if it goes into production at a price which is not prohibitive. (Its estimated cost is approximately twice that of flat plywood of the same thickness.) Because of the corrugations its strength is high in relation to its weight; and its decorative value is high because they make a strong pattern of light and shade. The material could be used for doors if two sheets were glued back-to-back with their corrugations at right angles to each other; its most immediate usefulness appears to lie in panels or party-walls for shops, showrooms and exhibition stands.



*This group of cupboards, shelves and drawers is built up from separate units. It achieves a unified appearance (so far as the variety of materials employed in this prototype, for demonstration purposes, permits) through the use of cover-strips which hide the joints at front and an outer "skin" of plywood covering top and ends.*



*Corrugated plywood made experimentally by Jicwood, using Cellobond adhesive, forms a light, strong party-wall. Curves are of the same radius as in ordinary corrugated metal sheets.*

CREDITS: designer, Ian Bradbery, MSIA; manufacturers, The Airscrew Co and Jicwood Ltd, Weybridge; sponsors (and adhesive suppliers) British Resin Products Ltd, London SW1.



**T**O THE MECHANICALLY MINDED, 1895 was an exciting year. In spite of stringent Highway Acts, people were driving the first few horseless carriages on the public roads — frequently without the man with a red flag who should have preceded them and exceeding the speed limit of 4 m.p.h. British engineers were building their first cars; a new industry had been founded. And that same year in the same part of the country the foundations of another great enterprise had been laid. At Tovil, Albert E. Reed had begun to make super-calendered newsprint at his first paper mill acquired the previous year. Successfully reviving other mills, he was soon to be known as “the Wizard of the South” and to build up an unrivalled reputation as a manufacturer of super-calendered printing papers, including newsprint. From this beginning, not sixty years ago, has grown the vast paper-making enterprise of the Reed Paper Group, producing today an ever-increasing tonnage of British newsprint and the largest output of Kraft paper in the whole of Europe.

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# Design NEWS SECTION

## PRODUCTS

### New furniture

The *Pegasus* settee illustrated on our cover is designed by Howard B. Keith, MSA, and made by H. K. Furniture Ltd (of 1a Andover Gardens, London N7). The back is upholstered in rubberised hair, the cushions are foam rubber and the wood is birch or beech. The model illustrated is upholstered in gun-metal grey and cherry red. Retail price is £27 1s 3d. There are *Pegasus* armchairs to match.

The bookcase, below, is the latest addition to the *Cumbræ* range of furniture made by H. Morris and Co Ltd. It is made in walnut, oak or mahogany, with sliding glass doors, and has five shelves. A two-shelf portion and a three-shelf portion can be juxtaposed either vertically or in the horizontal version shown. The price, in either form, is £16 13s 6d.

The back squab, as well as the reversible seat cushion, of a new chair by Bristow and Townsend Ltd is filled with Latex foam, and rests on tension springs. The shape of the squab has been designed to give maximum support at the points most needed, state the manufacturers. The chair costs £10 10s (retail), and shows an interesting development from the chair by the same makers illustrated in *DESIGN* for March 1951 (page 16).

### Ekco's latest

E. K. Cole Ltd announce the introduction of a new auto-change radiogram, the ARG168, with separate pick-up heads for long-playing and normal type records, and a seven-valve circuit giving

all-wave reception. The set is housed in a walnut veneer cabinet with storage space for all types of records. Price will be announced later.

### For photo-copying

A facsimile photo-copying machine for office use has been designed so that the operator can work comfortably from a seat in front of it. It is of roughly the same size as a small typing desk, and it incorporates a high-intensity exposure apparatus, a new and simplified semi-dry processing method, and storage space for various sizes of cut paper. Duplicates of documents can be made in less than two minutes. The *Reflex Copier*, as it is called, is made by Remington Rand Ltd (Commonwealth House, New Oxford Street, London WC1).

### Rubber display stand

Winston Clark Studio Ltd, of London W1, have designed for Berlei Ltd a brassiere display stand which is made of rubber and has the following advantages: (1) it is unbreakable; (2) it can stand in three positions, or hang; (3) as the stand is itself modelled with the pattern of Berlei's *Hollywood-Maxwell* brassiere, it can be used as a display model without merchandise if required.

### Round pack for a puff

A circular Cellophane envelope instead of the conventional square shape is being used by Caressa Ltd (527 Harrow Road, London W10) for their velvet powder puffs. The edges of the Cellophane are crimp-sealed and a gold pattern is printed on the underside of the material.



These two views of the new chair referred to in column 1 show clearly the use of Latex cushions for back as well as seat. Both are on covered tension springs also.



## BOOKS

### Two from Germany

Alexander Koch's *Bett und Couch* (102 pages) and *Hotels/Restaurants Cafe- und Barräume* (308 pages) are both published by Verlagsanstalt Alexander Koch GmbH, Stuttgart. Both follow the Continental practice of providing a photographic picture-book specialising in a range of contemporary design in one or a group of related products. Factual captions only are given and the reader is left to make his own comparisons and criticisms. In the first volume, on beds, every contemporary variant of a surface for sleeping is represented. An amazing number of ingenious devices are shown for collapsing the bed to clear the floor-space, or adapting it to day-time use; most of the beds look well-constructed though their tendency to disappear might lead to doubt on this score. The sofas and couches shown are models of simplicity, and a special section is devoted to the needs of children.

The volume on hotels is more ambitious, and because its range is wider, one is unfortunately more aware of omissions. It is, however, probably the most extensive collection of contemporary hotel and restaurant interiors yet made, and is worth very close attention. The emphasis in the book has been on rooms in which eating takes place and it is interesting to see the meditative calm engendered in so many of the German places by the rejection of heavily patterned surfaces, so that even a Swedish example looks in comparison a riot of pattern. Possibly economic causes are at the root of this. The book has a pleasing habit of including a plan and frequently a façade to accompany each interior. The few photographs which admit of comparison between individual rooms are most stimulating. The section on hotels proper might

well be expanded considerably and published as a separate volume.

Both volumes suffer from the fault of appearing to give an international comparison, which does not, in fact, bear investigation: there are enough examples from countries other than Germany to whet one's appetite, but not enough to give a comprehensive picture. Great Britain is particularly unfortunate, with only one example in *Beds* and none in *Hotels*. Let us hope this is not a considered judgment by Mr Koch. H.L.

### The drawing office

*Drawing Office Organisation* is a revised edition of a British Institute of Management booklet originally written for firms engaged in armament production, now widened in scope (price 5s). Advice is given on recruitment and training, equipment, lighting, liaison between drawing office and factory, the work of the print room, etc.

### Dollar opportunities?

*Dollar Exports: Sales to Public Authorities in the United States* (HMSO, 12s 6d) is a report by an American market-research firm on legislation and practice in US Federal, State and municipal purchasing. US manufacturers are at present in almost exclusive possession of this vast market.

### Alphabets for craftsmen

In these days of rising costs, any attempt to provide useful material inexpensively is to be praised. *Practical Alphabets* by Reginald Piggott are published by Sylvia Book Production Services, 62 Belvoir Drive, Leicester, in the form of loose sheets at 6d each (set of 8, post free, 4s 6d) and are intended to provide basic alphabets which letter-cutters, painters, decorators and other craftsmen should be able



The new *Cumbræ* bookcase: on right, two cases are stacked.

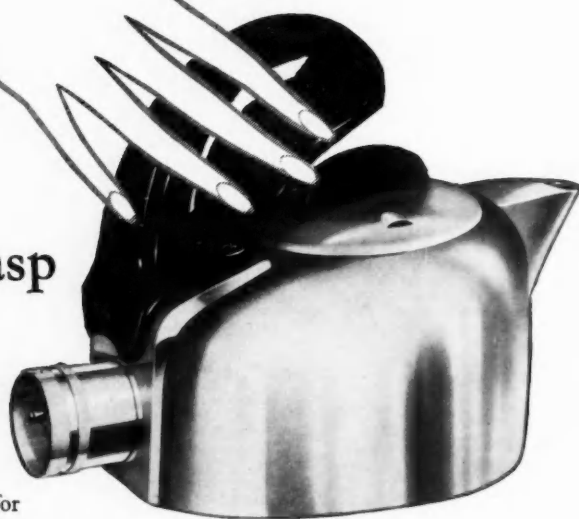
Illustrated below: 'Dovenset' Battery Tester, manufactured by Partridge, Wilson & Co. Ltd. 'H.M.V.' Kettle marketed by E.M.I. Sales & Service Ltd.



**GOOD DESIGN . . .**

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to adapt to their own media. Besides giving complete alphabets, the sheets show the construction, spacing and methods of drawing the letters.

The low price of the *Alphabets* should make it possible for education authorities to purchase them in quantity.

## A Folio on public lettering

The current series of six Design Folios (bound sets of large photographic plates, with study notes) has been completed with the publication of a *Folio on Public Lettering*—a subject of wide interest since lettering in public places is a form of design from which none of us can escape for long. We would not even want to escape if all signs were as well-designed as most of the 27 examples illustrated in this *Folio*. Its compilers have been catholic in their choice; the illustrations range from nineteenth-century slab-serif capitals on the walls of the Lincoln's Inn Heraldic Office and extra-bold Gill on the Metal Box Company's van to the dignified Roman capitals (in Good Taste which just stops short of Ghostliness) on one of the Big Five banks. We reproduce above an unusual contemporary example of carved lettering—a direction sign at the end of a little-used country lane leading to two houses. The *Folio* states that it was cut for the design-minded householders by Laurie Cribb.

The study notes in the *Public Lettering Folio* are interspersed with specimens of several handsome type-faces, and for contrast there are drawings of some real and hypothetical horrors.

Design Folios are issued by the Council of Industrial Design at 25s for the set of six *Folios* (which contain 12 plates each). Subjects of the other five *Folios* in the present series are: Sports gear; Knives, spoons, forks; Home lighting; Door and drawer furniture; Packaging. A portfolio to hold the set of six costs 5s. extra.

## Tradition—in pottery and popular art

Two recently issued books will throw new light, for most of their readers, on different facets of the English tradition in design. *English Popular Art*, by Margaret Lambert and Enid Marx (Batsford, 16s), deals with its subject more fully and more objectively than any other book which has appeared since the recent revival of interest in the "folk-art" of an industrialised nation.

The main contents are divided into chapters which deal with carving, metalwork, painting, textiles, pottery, glass and printing. The text is made more useful by footnotes drawing



Contemporary carved lettering—an illustration from the latest Design Folio.

attention to little-known references elsewhere; and the illustrations are charming as well as informative. They include line drawings in the text, inserted plates of half-tones in black and white, and, to make good value even better, colour plates as well.

*Early Staffordshire Pottery*, by Bernard Rackham (Faber, 25s), is, as its title indicates, more specialised. It is one of the series of *Faber Monographs on Pottery and Porcelain*, which are increasing in usefulness as they increase in number (and, happily, there are many titles yet to come).

Mr Rackham writes on his subject with the authority of a former Keeper of the Department of Ceramics in the Victoria and Albert Museum. As in all the books in this series, the text is comparatively short, serving as an introduction to many pages of plates (in this volume, there are 96 in black and white and 4 in colour). *Early Staffordshire Pottery* should be especially welcome because many earlier writers on English pottery have been inclined to skip the pre-Wedgwood chapters in the history of the Staffordshire Potteries, with which this book deals.

Illustrations which show early pieces of pottery, side by side with moulds used in their making, make the book unusually interesting for readers who are interested in the influence of production methods on design—and who is not? A. D.

*Art and the Artist in Hungary* by Derek Chittock is based on material collected by three artists who visited Hungary in August 1950. A small section deals with art schools and the training of industrial designers. (Hungarian News and Information Service, 9d).

The official catalogue of the ninth Triennale exhibition in Milan last year is now available. It contains nearly 150 pages of illustrations (Tiranti, 32s).

## On typographical style

Lund Humphries have produced a booklet of *House Rules*, compiled and designed by Herbert Spencer, MSIA. The booklet was first intended "for the guidance of compositors at the Country Press, Bradford" but will repay readership by many other people. Today, old rules on punctuation and similar points of style are not accepted without question; Herbert Spencer puts forward some suggestions which deserve wide consideration, even though one cannot expect them to be universally acceptable. They agree largely with DESIGN's own typographical style; we have made one or two minor modifications in it on the strength of Mr Spencer's arguments in *House Rules*.

## Two notable articles

*The Magazine of Building*, New York, November 1951 issue, devoted its front cover and 13 pages of text and pictures to the buildings of the new General Motors Technical Center designed by Saarinen: "in their bold, mature design General Motors has joined hands with architect Eero Saarinen to bring the research approach to building. . . . They don't look like buildings, as we know them. The group looks more like an exalted industrial product."

"Japanese Commercial Art since the War"—a subject which has received very little attention in this country—is discussed in an 8-page feature in *Graphis*, Zurich, No 37. The article is illustrated entirely by the work of artists aged between 32 and 39.

Books received, to be reviewed in forthcoming issues: *The Penrose Annual* edited by R. B. Fishenden (Lund Humphries, 30s); *Art and Everyman* (Bats-

ford, 84s); *Design in Business Printing* by Herbert Spencer (Sylvan Press, 12s 6d).

## Manufacturers' publications

*The House that Aga Built* is a well-designed brochure which does justice to an enterprising idea developed by Aga Heat Ltd. The firm recently commissioned an architect (Michael Shephard, R Arch, ARIBA) to design two houses which would be suitable for the installation of Aga appliances and for building under present UK restrictions. Drawings and plans of the houses are reproduced, together with details explaining how each design makes best use of the heating and cooking facilities available.

A London typesetter and a Manchester typesetter-printer have both produced leaflets, as handsome as they are useful, of type-faces recently added to their ranges. Wace, 40 Drury Lane, W.C.2, show alphabets of Bembo and of Roman Compressed (recently recut by Stephenson Blake) in several sizes; Walkers (Showcards) Ltd, Faraday Street, Manchester 1, show Rondo, an Amsterdam Typefoundry script.

Monotype Corporation Ltd, Salfords, Redhill, Surrey, have resumed publication of their *News Letter*. Sunvic Controls Ltd, 10 Essex Street, Strand, London W.C.2, have started publication of *News from Sunvic*. These are both four-page leaflets.

Other publications received: Rowney's *Artists' Almanac 1952*; *Floors for a Lifetime* (Timber Development Association Ltd, 1s); *Industrial Directory of Wales and Monmouthshire*, second edition (Industrial Association of Wales and Monmouthshire, 10s 6d).

Eighteenth-century farmer's mug, hand-painted, now in the Salisbury Museum. From English Popular Art, reviewed on this page. Compare the Eric Ravilious jug in DESIGN October 1951 page 31.





## SHOPS

### Displaying textiles

In redesigning the showroom of Jacobs Linens Ltd in Tottenham Court Road, J. Edward Sander has turned a dim room into one with plenty of light and many practical display fittings. A pleasant but unobtrusive wallpaper covers the walls and an ugly staircase and lift-shaft are hidden by mahogany and ash facings which match the furniture - including a new inquiry desk. The wall fitting illustrated has movable wooden dowels which serve to make the glass shelves adjustable and to keep bulky objects, such as blankets, in position.

Design Research Unit have been appointed architects to Peter Robinson Ltd for the reversion of their Oxford Street store. Misha Black, OBE, FSA, MInst RA, Alexander Gibson, ARIBA, AA Dipl, and Norman Wicheloe (assistant) will be responsible for the work.

## EXHIBITIONS

### Sweden honours British designers

The first exhibition of advertising art to be held in the Swedish National Museum at Stockholm was opened last month. It is devoted to the work of eight British advertising designers. They are Ashley Havinden, OBE, RDI, Tom Eckersley, OBE, Abram Games, F. H. K. Henion, MBE, Pat Keely, Hans Schlegel (all Fellows of the SIA), and Lewitt-Him.

The exhibits include posters, original paintings and sketches, and textile and wallpaper designs.

### Shell show

A photographic exhibition of the work of tankers in the Anglo-Saxon Petroleum Company's fleet provides a good example of a simple layout and standard furniture and fittings used to provide an attractive display at little cost.

Shown in the illustration (on right) is furniture from Ernest Race Ltd, with Hyliter light fittings designed by Courtney Pope (Electrical) Ltd. The exhibition was designed by the publicity department of the Shell Petroleum Co Ltd, and Acorn Electrical Ltd were responsible for the arrangement of the light fittings. The exhibition has been touring British ports.

### Show houses: in Cheshire and London

A new three-bedroom house at Sale, Cheshire, which has been furnished in contemporary style, was opened to the public on 15 March for three weeks. Joint sponsors are the *Manchester Evening News* and the Council of Industrial Design. Psyche Pirie was responsible for the interior



Wall display fitting in the new Jacobs Linens showroom.

decoration and furnishing: all the furniture used in the house is obtainable from retailers in and around Manchester.

Mrs Pirie was also the designer responsible for the furnishing of the three-bedroom People's House at last month's Ideal Home Exhibition - one of the three houses exhibited by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government in co-operation with the Council of Industrial Design (DESIGN, February, page 32).

## NAMES

Frank Mortimer, FRSA, MSIA, and Harold Wyatt, Dipl. Arch (L'pool), ARIBA, MSIA, consultant designers, are now in partnership under the style of "Industrial Design and Development." Their business address is 26 Albemarle Street, London W1.

Mr Mortimer's designs for Crompton meters, Trinal hospital furniture and Simpson's jam packaging have all been illustrated in DESIGN. Mr Wyatt was for some time an Industrial Officer of the Council of Industrial Design and has written in these pages. He recently redesigned the White Bear Inn (formerly Brasserie Universelle), Piccadilly Circus.

A design organisation which will specialise in package and interior design under the title THM

Partners (56a Sydney Mews, London SW3) has been formed by John Tandy, Lucy Halford and Derek Mills, who were formerly with the Lonsdale-Hands organisation.

John Tandy has been an associate designer of Richard Lonsdale-Hands for the last 11 years. Lucy Halford was responsible for the interior design of properties owned by Vaux and Associated Breweries for three years and then worked on the Whitbread account. Derek Mills has been with the Lonsdale-Hands organisation since 1947 and was responsible for many pack designs.

The Institution of Engineering Draughtsmen and Designers has formed a Standardisation Committee to prepare reports on communications from the British Standards Institution and other standardisation bodies, etc.

It is also announced that conditions of admission to the Institution have been slightly raised.

## LETTERS

### The problem of handles

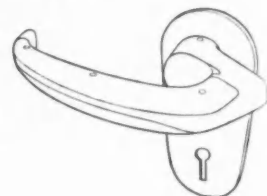
SIR: Mrs C. G. Tomrley's excellent article on handles, in your March issue, drew attention to what many manufacturers still apparently consider an unimportant subject. These small fittings, often the only tangible link with the user of

the product, can easily mar an otherwise well-designed article, causing serious annoyance with consequent ill-will towards the maker. . . . Whether research is carried out by simple practical tests or reports from the ergonomics experts are studied, there is no doubt that much more attention should be paid to such details.

Apart from manufacturing considerations, handle design problems fall under two main headings, physical and psychological.

Under "physical", the actions of fingers, wrists, elbows and even shoulders play their part. If we decide that a certain handle, originally designed to push, might serve equally well to turn when operated at wrist level, it does not follow that it would be suitable at shoulder level. An electric knife-switch with straight handle might comfortably be used through an arc of 90°, but to follow smoothly through 180°, a handle of the D, T or L shape, with grip at right angles to the arc, would be better. What a pity that the charming short-throw levers found on beer engines are not found also on switchboards. . . .

"Psychological" points concern the use expected of a handle because of its appearance. For example, a flat circular knob



with fine milled edge normally indicates a smooth control capable of delicate adjustment, whereas a thin bar type suggests a coarser action, usually in a series of definite "clicks".

Mechanical efficiency suffers from careless design. The door handle illustrated loses power by starting off in the wrong direction. Effective leverage is only from the centre-line of the shaft; if the handle swept much more to the right, it would require a twist instead of simple downward pressure.

R. M. KAY,  
Metropolitan-Vickers  
Electrical Co Ltd,  
Manchester 17

SIR: I was interested in the article on handles in the March issue of DESIGN as it is a subject to which we have to give some attention. We have in fact just completed a new design of iron in which we have had to consider both right- and left-hand use.

In the case of the iron illustrated in your article, it is a pity the user has not put her thumb on the rest provided for it by the designer.



The Shell photographic exhibition, Tankers.

Incidentally, have you noticed how beautiful, anatomically, is the ordinary hand-microphone telephone? It is good enough for greater work than it has to do.

D. W. MORPHY  
Director  
Morphy-Richards Ltd  
St Mary Cray, Kent

SIR: In the otherwise excellent article on "The Problem of Handles," I was sorry to see the finger-tip pull-grips on compartment doors of LM Region corridor coaches quoted as examples of good design.

As a user, these handles strike me as an example of a design that is excellent in appearance and performs well under test, but fails in general use. Provided that the ball-race is well lubricated and nothing interferes with the free movement of the doors, the handles are reasonably convenient; on the other hand, any stiffness is likely to result in painfully strained fingers. For safety, it seems essential that railway carriage doors should have handles that can be gripped firmly — wrenched, if need be; a condition that these handles do not fulfil.

KENNETH B. SHAW  
London N 5

### Lost elegance of Bloomsbury lamp-posts

SIR: The Bedford Estate has with admirable discretion controlled the tenants of the Bloomsbury squares so that the fine architectural character of the properties has remained substantially unaltered: the external fittings, door plates, etc. all have to conform to a standard acceptable to the estate.

Unfortunately the estate would not appear to have any jurisdiction over what happens



*The increasing ugliness of the Bloomsbury lamp-posts, below, is the more regrettable when it is realised that they once had lanterns of this or similar pattern.*

beyond the railings of the houses. The Holborn Borough Council has recently undertaken the relighting of the area and in doing so has fitted a lamp housing which, although undoubtedly efficient, looks very ill at ease in these squares. No doubt the new lanterns will be more acceptable when London's soot has toned down the fresh "municipal green" paint, but this will not compensate for the loss of the simple elegance of the lanterns and brackets that they have replaced.

PETER RAY  
Waltham Abbey, Essex



*The first adaptation of an early gas lamp-post and (right) the latest.*

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## LETTERS *continued*

### **Ships' cabins**

SIR: Having just read the article on the ships' cabin competition (DESIGN, March) I would be interested to know if the assessors had any comments to make regarding modifications. If they had, and they were relevant to your illustrations, I think they should be published.

It would be constructive, I am sure, and instructive to designers and makers. As one who goes to sea a fair amount, I consider the assegai-like arms of the chairs in the winning design positively lethal.

GEOFFREY DUNN  
Dunn's of Bromley

Alister Maynard, Chief Officer of the CoID Scottish Committee and author of DESIGN's article on the competition, comments: "The 'lethal' chairs loomed very large in the perspective drawings, but evidently did not appear of such importance to the judges who had so many other more basic considerations to take into account."

"The competition was, of course, as Mr Dunn will be the first to appreciate, largely an exercise in planning."

### **Housewife's views**

SIR: After 18 years of chores and children I am at last finding time to take more than a fleeting glance at our contemporary

creative arts; and the closer I look the more bewildered I become.

I found a clue to the mystery on page 2 of DESIGN for January: "In fact he [the consumer] is not so . . . easy to reach as the producer."

Is this the reason that so many beautiful, well-made, useful and often reasonably-priced articles for home use merely cause irritation instead of joy to the housewife? So frequently these articles make so much work and take up so much time in their maintenance that their possession is not worth while. . . .

It would appear that there is an enormous gulf between producer and consumer-maintainer in the domestic field. No doctor would allow industry to design his tools. No business man would allow such waste of time and energy as is spent in unnecessary movements and work in 90 per cent of British homes today.

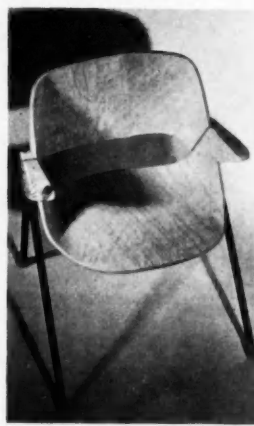
MARGARET PRICE,  
London SE13

### **Correction**

Although Terence Conran has designed a number of fabrics recently for David Whitehead Ltd, the print illustrated on page 29 last month was not designed for that firm, as stated in our caption, but for Edinburgh Weavers. Alastair Morton of Edinburgh Weavers comments that it "was produced at Dennis Lennon's instigation for the Rayon Centre."

## COMPETITION

In the second product design competition organised by the National Industrial Design Committee of Canada, the standard of entries was considered



Designer: Lawrie McIntosh,  
Toronto.

by the jury to be substantially higher than in the first competition – but still not high enough to permit them to allocate the full number of prizes available.

The chair illustrated was the first prize winner in the only sec-

tion (out of four) in which a first prize was awarded. It used plywood, solid wood, and seamless steel tubing, and could be shipped in knock-down form for assembly by the purchaser. "While the use of bent and moulded plywood is by no means new," the jury commented, "this design showed an . . . exceedingly well-thought-out approach to this material."

They further commented that "the level of presentation left much to be desired and that those designs which incorporated the best thinking also happened to be the best presentations. The capacity to develop an idea appears to be closely related to the capacity to present an idea, and competitors, therefore, would benefit from a critical evaluation of their own work from this point of view. In many instances, particularly in the category devoted to chairs, there was conspicuous effort to achieve 'original' designs at the expense of good sense."

## CREDITS

Pages 2-3: James Gardner, OBE, RDI, FSIA, was consultant designer for the Grand Hall to the Ideal Home Exhibition organisers. (Exhibition architect, Trevor Smith, LRIBA). *Daily Mail* photograph.

The photograph of a gas lamp at top of p. 29 is reproduced by courtesy of William Sugg and Co Ltd. Photographs at foot of same page by Peter Ray, FSIA.



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Please see this exhibit at the B.I.F. May 5-16, Stand No. F69 70 Ground Floor, Grand Hall, Olympia.

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